

Rescue Plan. The bold relief package created the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to provide grants to restaurants and bars that lost revenue due to COVID-19, added additional funds to the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program, added additional funds to the Targeted EIDL Advance Program, and provided \$350 billion to States and localities, which helped spur new State programs and replenish existing ones, like the RELIEF Act and the Maryland Strong Economic Recovery Initiative in my own home State, and created a new Community Navigator Program to get the SBA's entrepreneurial development resources in the communities that would benefit from them the most.

We had the Federal programs. Then we had the navigators to help small businesses get those funds. And we provided local funds through State and local governments so they could help small businesses. We really went through everything we could to help those that needed the help the most.

The significance of these actions—the passage of the bipartisan Economic Aid Act in December, the Biden administration's administrative steps, and the American Rescue Plan—cannot be overstated. They helped set our Nation on course for the most robust economic recovery in American history.

Phase 3 of PPP—January to May 31, 2021—had the most equitable loan approval shares, according to a report released in January of this year by economists Robert Fairlie and Frank Fossen. Fairlie and Fossen, both of whom have been following PPP and the pandemic's impact on small businesses closely for the past 2 years, cited the extraordinary increase in loan volume of Prestamos, a CDFI that targets Hispanic-owned small businesses, as an example of the success of the PPP under the Biden administration.

These numbers are impressive. During phase 1 of PPP, Prestamos ranked 4,274 among PPP lenders by volume. That was phase 1, where you really had to have an existing relationship if you were going to be able to get a PPP loan. In phase 2, where we did a better job of targeting, they ranked 325. In phase 3, they were among the top ranked PPP lenders by volume.

They wrote that the 14-day priority period in particular “helped to bring the PPP loans to disadvantaged small businesses.”

Thank you to the Biden administration and the Democrats in Congress.

The program hasn't only been good for small businesses; it has also supported small community banks. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis wrote that small business lending was a “key business line” for small community banks during the operation of the program and that the program will help smaller banks regain some of the ground they have lost through larger competitors in the small business loan market.

The Biden administration's implementation of the Shuttered Venue Op-

erators Grant Program has also been a resounding success. After awarding more than 12,800 initial grants worth more than \$11 billion at an average of more than 1 million per institution, the administration also awarded more than 8,700 supplemental grants worth more than \$3 billion.

I mention all of that because we know our shuttered venues would be out of business if it weren't for the shuttered loan program. It has kept them in business.

And the administration successfully provided more than 100,000 restaurants with the Restaurant Revitalization Fund grants, worth more than \$28 billion in grants.

I have seen firsthand the benefit of these grants as I have traveled in Maryland. On Small Business Friday, last year, I did a walking tour down Main Street in Annapolis. Every single restaurant owner I visited shared that they may not have survived without the Restaurant Revitalization Fund grant. All of these restaurants are more than just a place to grab a bite to eat. These are decades-old institutions owned by small business operators, and their closures would have been deeply felt by the community.

In the coming weeks, Congress must finish the job by replenishing the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. There are still hundreds of thousands of applicants waiting on funds. We have to finish the job for our restaurants, because if there are any lessons learned from the past 2 years, it is that when Congress comes together to produce thoughtful policies that address the system issues in our economy, it yields results.

After enduring the deepest economic contraction since 1947, the American economy grew at the fastest rate since 1984 with the first year of Joe Biden's administration.

We are back, but we still have pockets that need help.

In an ironic twist of history, the lessons we have learned and the expertise and capacity that we have built up within the SBA have now prepared us for what can only be described as an entrepreneurial renaissance underway in our communities. According to the Census Bureau, Americans registered 4.4 million new businesses in 2020—4.4 million new businesses—the highest total on record and a 24-percent increase over the prior year.

Remarkably, the surge is being driven by entrepreneurs in some of our most underserved communities, and our policies helped make that a reality. For example, data shows that between February 2020 and August 2021, the number of Black business owners increased by 38 percent.

Congress needs to take advantage of the entrepreneurial spirit that is surging throughout our communities by continuing to invest in our entrepreneurs, especially those in underserved communities. We have demonstrated that the historic structural

barriers that have inhibited the growth of small businesses in underserved communities are far from insurmountable.

Now is not the time to retreat. It is time for us to double down. In implementing lessons learned during the implementation of PPP, we should create a new direct loan program within SBA and further empower small businesses. We must build on the inroads that the SBA has made with underserved communities during the pandemic to get entrepreneurial development, business mentorship, and technical training into communities that would benefit from it the most. And we should continue to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that American small businesses have the tools they need to emerge from the COVID-19 stronger than ever.

The bottom line is our policies made a difference. We saved America's small businesses. We need to continue to work in the future to make sure the climate for small businesses is healthy so that our economy can continue to grow.

We know that small businesses are the growth engine of job growth in America. We know that they are where most innovation takes place in our economy.

Our policies during this pandemic helped save small businesses and now expand the opportunity for small businesses, but we need to continue to pay attention to these issues.

I hope we can do this in a bipartisan way. We need to replenish the funds for those that have not been able to get it under the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and we need to pay attention to small businesses in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

#### STRATEGIC DETERRENCE

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, earlier this month, the commanders of the U.S. Strategic Command and the U.S. Space Command, ADM Charles Richard and GEN James Dickinson, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee for their annual posture hearing.

The backdrop for their testimony was two twin challenges facing the United States and our allies: Putin's desire to recreate the Russian Empire, demonstrated most recently in his unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, and China's plan to massively expand their power, rolling back U.S. influence in the process.

Both of these American adversaries are expanding their nuclear arsenals to back up their ambitions.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces and with STRATCOM's headquarters in my State of Nebraska, I appreciated this chance to engage with Admiral Richard on such an important issue.

As the commander of STRATCOM, Admiral Richard has one of the highest pressure jobs in the world—overseeing America's nuclear forces. He knows

better than anyone how important our nuclear deterrent is to preventing war around the world, and he understands the threat posed by our adversaries' growing arsenals.

Admiral Richard told the Armed Services Committee that Putin's war in Ukraine is giving us "a very vivid real-world example of the importance of extended deterrence." What he meant by that is that, even though Putin has brought a major war back to Europe for the first time since the end of World War II and heartbreaking destruction to the people of Ukraine, nuclear deterrence, including the extended deterrence commitments that we provide our allies, has shielded NATO countries and discouraged the conflict's spread. More specifically, without our nuclear deterrent, our plans to protect American citizens and our allies would fall apart.

Take it straight from Admiral Richard. He said:

Every operational plan in the Department of Defense, and every other capability we have, rests on the assumption that strategic deterrence is holding, and in particular that nuclear deterrence is holding.

If strategic or nuclear deterrence fails, no other plan and no other capability in the Department of Defense is going to work as designed.

When people who care about a safe and secure America say that strategic deterrence, especially nuclear deterrence, is the bedrock of our national security, that is exactly what we mean because, at the end of the day, American strength is the only thing that tyrants like Putin actually respect.

Just as we need to reassess our approach to Putin in light of his invasion of Ukraine, we also need to rethink our approach to our nuclear deterrent. Barely 2 months ago, on January 3, the five members of the U.N. Security Council released a joint declaration on "Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races." Russia, of course, is one of those five members.

People who want our deterrence to continue aging while Russia and China modernize their own forces, including many members of the media, rushed to hail the joint statement as a long-awaited and revolutionary breakthrough. They seemed certain that we had turned a corner and that by signing this statement, we were ushering in a new and enduring era of world peace.

I was skeptical. I wrote an op-ed in National Review Online that responded to what I called the "delusional" parts of that statement and the wishful thinking that led the United States to sign our name next to those of Russia and China.

More than a month before Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, I wrote:

This would be a historic moment for international unity—or rather, it would be if it were true. China and Russia may have signed this document, but they do not intend to honor it.

They clearly did not.

Since then, Russia has put their deterrent on high alert, essentially

threatening to use their nukes against the other countries that signed that statement. I believe it was clear to anyone who had been paying attention that signing our names to a feel-good piece of paper wasn't actually going to change anything about Putin's behavior or the behavior of China.

While our deterrent remains effective, we are asking it to protect against a growing range of threats. Russia is continuing the deadliest war in Europe in nearly a century, and the Chinese Communist Party—well, they are hard at work expanding their own nuclear arsenal. And they are doing it at a pace we have never seen in world history.

I asked Admiral Richard about the U.S. intelligence community's estimate that China plans to potentially quadruple their nuclear arsenal by the year 2030. He told the committee:

Last fall, I formally reported to the Secretary of Defense the PRC's strategic breakout. Their expansion and modernization in 2021 alone is breathtaking. And the concern I expressed in my testimony last April has now become a reality.

China is attempting a rapid buildup of unprecedented scope and scale, and we have no reason to think they will stop once they reach the Pentagon's estimate. We have even less reason to think it will take China 8 more years to grow their stockpile to 1,000 deliverable warheads.

Admiral Richard agreed. In response to my questioning, he said:

Whatever the time estimate that the intelligence community gives you on anything from China, divide it by two and maybe by four and you will get closer to the right answer.

So, no, I don't know that we have any idea of [China's] endpoint and/or speed.

And as Admiral Richard pointed out at another point in the hearing, many observers have gotten too caught up on the "1,000 by 2030" figure.

Since the Pentagon released their report in November of last year, an unspoken assumption has developed that China will simply stop building nukes once they reach that point, whether that is in 2025 or 2030. But let me point out, the Chinese Communist Party has given us no reason to think that that might be the case.

In fact, given their ambitions to take Taiwan and develop a Chinese sphere of influence beyond Asia, I think it is very likely they will continue building far beyond that number.

And even as China works to expand its nuclear arsenal, ours is rapidly aging. The United States has not designed or built a new nuclear warhead since the end of the Cold War. We don't even have the ability to produce a new warhead right now, and we are the only nuclear power unable to do so. China and Russia can. The United Kingdom can. France can. And India and Pakistan can. Even North Korea can.

But here in the United States, we cannot. Instead, we have focused on extending the life of our current systems. This has pushed our deterrent far be-

yond its designed lifetime and made the need for modernization even more acute.

Admiral Richard went out of his way to stress this point during his testimony. He told the Senate Armed Services Committee:

Right now, I am executing my strategic deterrence mission under historic stress, crisis levels of deterrence, crisis deterrence dynamics that we've only seen a couple of times in our nation's history.

And I'm doing it with submarines built in the '80s and '90s, an air-launched cruise missile built in the '80s, intercontinental ballistic missiles built in the '70s, a bomber built in the '60s, part of our nuclear command and control that predates the internet, and a nuclear weapons complex that dates back to the Manhattan era.

We have ignored the need to modernize our deterrence for far too long. As Admiral Richard said at another point during his testimony: The nuclear force we have today is the absolute minimum we need to guarantee our security.

The world has only gotten more dangerous over the past decade, and the last few weeks in Ukraine are the latest evidence of that.

But Washington—well, Washington has spent that time procrastinating.

Our failure to make tough decisions has left Admiral Richard with a deterrent that simply hasn't kept up with those of our adversaries. The final piece of Admiral Richard's testimony I will read is this:

We have reached a point where we can no longer deter with the leftovers of the Cold War. We have life extended them to the maximum extent possible.

We must now start to recapitalize, re-manufacture those that require a very robust infrastructure . . . We're 10 years behind the point where we needed to start recapitalizing the infrastructure . . . And the consequence is we simply won't have the capabilities that we are going to have to have to deter the threat environment we're in.

We cannot keep kicking the can down the road. We are not in the 1990s or the 2000s anymore. The threat environment is changing, and we have no choice but to keep up. But our nuclear deterrent is sized based on the 2010 New START Treaty, written in a very different world, before Putin decided to behave like a war criminal and before China's unprecedented nuclear breakout.

To wrap up, I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to an exchange from the Foreign Relations Committee's hearings during the ratification process for the New START Treaty.

Responding to a question about whether the posture set by the treaty left the United States with nuclear forces beyond what we needed, the STRATCOM commander at the time, GEN Kevin Chilton, completely rejected that idea. He said instead:

I think the arsenal that we have is exactly what is needed today to provide the deterrent.

We need to think long and hard about if a deterrent designed around the

threats of 2010 is still what is needed for the very different and much more dangerous world we live in now.

I hope the administration will address that question in its upcoming Nuclear Posture Review. In fact, the upcoming fiscal year budget and various strategy documents we expect to be released soon, including the NPR, are a chance for the administration to show that they do understand the challenges that we face. Most fundamentally, that is the erosion of global stability and the increasingly challenging threat environment facing our country.

These documents are an opportunity for President Biden to propose a realistic plan to meet these threats. I hope that he will. The hard truth is that every day that we refuse to commit to the modernization schedule today's world needs is a day that Russia and China become greater threats. They get further ahead.

If we wait too long, we are going to wake up 5, 10, 20 years from now with no way to deter adversaries who did commit to modernization. That is not a position anyone wants to wind up in.

We need to act like adults and make difficult choices to prioritize our nuclear deterrent, the most fundamental part of our defense strategy. And we have to keep modernization on schedule in the FY2023 NDAA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and vote on Calendar No. 678, the nomination of Victoria Calvert, under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Calvert nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Victoria Marie Calvert, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Calvert nomination?

Ms. BALDWIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Leahy	Smith
Collins	Lujan	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	

#### NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Lummis	Toomey
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Portman	

#### NOT VOTING—4

Casey	Shaheen
Manchin	Sullivan

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNIZING IDAHO OLYMPIANS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, along with my colleagues Senator JIM RISCH and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, I congratulate three Idaho athletes who competed in the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing. I commend Andrew Blaser, Chase Josey, and Hilary Knight for their diligence and dedication that resulted in them representing our great State and country on this world stage.

Four-time Olympic medalist Hilary Knight, of Sun Valley, once again competed with distinction on the U.S. women's hockey team. The team earned a silver medal, and Hilary scored one of the team's two goals in the final game. In the 2022 Olympic Games, she scored her 12th career Olympic goals, becoming the second leading scorer in U.S. Olympics Women's Hockey history. With 15 career Olympic assists, Hilary also ranks second in most career assists. She played

in her 22nd career Olympic Game, giving her the record for the most Olympic Games played in U.S. women's hockey history. This follows her earning a gold medal in the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang; a silver medal in the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi; and a silver medal in the XXI Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

Two-time Olympian Chase Josey, of Hailey, earned seventh place in the snowboard halfpipe. Chase completed two frontside double cork 1080s and a cab double cork 1260 in his third run of the 2022 Olympics, earning 79.50 points. He earned sixth place in the halfpipe in the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang and was fifth at the 2021 world championships.

Nick Blaser, of Meridian, who ranked 28th in the world, competed in his first Olympic games on the U.S. Olympic Skeleton Team. With three competitors, the team was characterized as "small but mighty." Nick, who came in 21st place at the 2022 Olympics, was a top pole vaulter and hurdler at the University of Idaho before competing in skeleton after college.

These athletes lead through their examples of dedication and persistence. As younger generations watch, they show us all how to turn preparation into achievements. Thank you, Olympians, for representing Idaho and our country so well in the Olympics, while overcoming the added pressures of training and competing during a global pandemic, in a high-risk and dangerous political environment. We commend you for your extraordinary hard work and commitment.

#### EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the Records on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

\*Coast Guard nomination of Min H. Kim, to be Commander.

\*Coast Guard nomination of Michael A. Cintron, to be Captain.

\*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LEE, and Mr. BOOKER):